

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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March 14, 1988

URGENT ACTION

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TO: Correspondents, NAS Committee on Human Rights

FROM: Eliot Stellar, ^{ES}Chairman

SUBJECT: Turkish Surgeon, Dr. Nihat Sargin

The Committee is very concerned about the continued detention of Dr. Nihat Sargin, a surgeon and chest specialist. Dr. Sargin received his medical degree in 1957 from the Medical Faculty of Istanbul University and a degree as a chest specialist in 1961. He worked at various hospitals and also had a private practice, until 1970, when he began working full time for the Turkish Workers' Party. In 1975, Sargin became the Secretary General of the Worker's Party. The Party was banned, along with other political parties, in 1980 following the military coup.

Dr. Sargin was arrested on November 16, 1987 upon his return to Turkey following 7 years exile in Brussels. His return, shortly before the general national elections, was widely publicized in the Turkish press. According to Amnesty International, Dr. Sargin, who is 61 years old and reported to suffer from hypertension, was held incommunicado at the Ankara State Security Prison for 19 days following his arrest. Dr. Sargin reportedly told his lawyer that he was tortured during this time--torture which included electric shocks and hanging. Dr. Sargin is considered to be a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

In December 1987 the Ankara State Security Court charged Dr. Sargin with "leading membership in an illegal organization," "making communist propaganda," and "insulting state authorities." If convicted, Dr. Sargin could receive a sentence of up to 36 years in prison.

In response to a formal complaint of torture filed by Dr. Sargin with the Ankara prosecutor, the prosecutor ruled that no evidence of torture had been established. Sargin's lawyer immediately appealed the decision, claiming that the prosecutor had not examined all possible evidence and requesting that independent doctors be allowed to examine Dr. Sargin.

Please consider writing appeals to the following officials, requesting that Dr. Sargin be unconditionally released on the grounds that he is imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of his political beliefs. In making your appeals, please do not mention the Committee or Amnesty International.

President Kenan Evren
Office of the President
Devlet Baskanligi
Ankara, TURKEY

Prime Minister Turgut Ozal
Office of the Prime Minister
Basbakanlik
Ankara, TURKEY

(Your Excellency:)

(Your Excellency:)

Send copies to:

Turkish Medical Association
Mithatpasa Caddesi 49/8
Yenisehir
Ankara, TURKEY

Correspondents in the U.S. may also want to send copies to:

Mr. Townsend Friedman
Director, Office of Southern European Affairs
EUR/SE Rm. 5509
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Ambassador Dr. Sukru Elekdag
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
1606 23rd St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Kindly send copies of your appeals to the Committee.